



Disaster News

July 12, 2005
DR-1593-001
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OFFICIALS URGE CARE WHEN OPERATING A HOME GENERATOR

ATLANTA—Electric generators can be lifesavers when your household electricity is interrupted, but they can also take a life when they are used carelessly or by persons who are unaware of the potential danger.

Officials of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have words of caution for citizens who are using gasoline-powered generators to keep their appliances running in the wake of Hurricane Dennis.

One of most important cautions is never to run a generator indoors or in any area where ventilation is limited and people or animals are present. The carbon monoxide fumes emitted by gasoline engines can be fatal, often without the victims, especially those who are sleeping, ever realizing the danger.

An additional caution, the state advises, is to install carbon monoxide alarms inside your home to warn when carbon monoxide levels from any source pose a serious health risk.

You should not hook the generator directly into to your home power supply because it could energize the outside power lines and potentially injure or electrocute an unwary utility lineman. Always connect the generator to the appliances with extension cords.

You should choose a generator that produces more power than will be needed by the appliances you plan to connect it to. Look at the labels on lighting, appliances and equipment you plan to connect to the generator to determine the mount of power needed to operate the equipment. Compare this to the generators rated output.

Also, make certain you buy one that is listed with the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL), which rates electric equipment for safety.

Before refueling a generator, you be certain it has been turned off long enough to cool. Excessive heat can generate a fire.

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FEMA prepares the nation for all hazards and manages federal response and recovery efforts following an incident or national significance. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, trains first responders, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.